



Healthline Report

Department of Health and Hospitals News for the Louisiana Legislature

Nursing Home Inspection Results Now Available Online

For citizens seeking information to help them choose a nursing home, information about nursing home inspections can be found online. Created by the Department of Health and Hospitals' nursing home regulators (Health Standards Section) and management information staff, the new Web site allows users to view the survey results of any nursing home in Louisiana.

The site uses a four-color system (red, orange, yellow, green) to visually describe immediate jeopardy, actual harm, potential for more than minimal harm and compliance, respectively. In addition to the color-coded system, details of the full inspection are just one click away. Visitors can easily determine the scope and severity of any deficiency, as well as the federal guidelines used by inspectors to determine compliance. The site clearly indicates if the survey is an annual inspection, a follow-up visit, a complaint investigation or a life safety code inspection.

Dr. Fred Cerise, DHH Secretary, said the Web site continues the agency's efforts to prompt quality improvements in nursing homes, as well as give consumers information to help them make more informed decisions.

"There has been a lot of attention recently to quality in nursing homes," he said. "As people make decisions about how they will care for their loved ones, we hope they will use this site to get an idea as to how nursing homes perform during annual inspections."

This site is the second effort in less than a month for DHH to post inspection results to its Internet site. In April, the agency created an online database of restaurant inspection reports. The site proved so successful that an avalanche of visitors caused it to crash after only two days.

"We have tested this site extensively, and are confident it will hold up to the amount of traffic we expect it to get," said Patrick Potier, DHH's director of information services.

Cerise said the Health Standards staff designed the database and the site interface to make it as user-friendly as possible. "Health Standards director Lisa Deaton was challenged to develop a site that would allow the public to readily get this type of information," he said. "With this addition to our Web site, we are continuing to find ways to help the public better understand what we do, as well as how facilities are regulated."

When logging onto the page, found at <http://www.dhh.louisiana.gov>, anyone interested can search for nursing homes by name, address, parish or city. This makes it possible to look up the status of one particular home or to search for all facilities in a particular area. The site also provides information about nursing home ownership and administration.

State Honors Emergency Service Workers This Week

This week, the DHH Bureau of Emergency Medical Services is holding its 12th annual Emergency Medical Services Week. During the week, fire and EMS crews promote messages of healthy living and personal safety to Louisiana residents and emergency workers are recognized for heroic acts.

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EMS Week is also a time when fire and EMS crews provide vital educational material and training to adults and children on topics such as injury prevention, recognizing an emergency and what to do until help arrives.

The DHH Bureau of Emergency Medical Services oversees EMS workers throughout Louisiana. Dr. Fred Cerise, DHH secretary, says it is important to showcase the skills of EMS professionals.

“This time of the year is a great opportunity for us to educate citizens about injury prevention and safety awareness,” he said. “Serious injuries, automobile accidents, sudden heart attacks or emergency births are examples of situations that require emergency response and transportation.”

EMS for Children Day was held Monday, May 16 at Independence Park in Baton Rouge. Children from daycare and Head Start programs in the Baton Rouge area were invited to the park for a day where safety met fun. The children were entertained and educated with activities that focused on all aspects of safety, particularly fire, water, bicycle and poison safety, using 911 to call help and EMS workers and ambulances.

“We are delighted to host this event each year,” said Nancy Bourgeois, EMS director. “It is extremely important that safety messages are instilled in children at an early age. It leads to fewer accidents in the home and greater safety of all children and their families.

Additional Swim Advisories Issued for Cameron Parish

Two swim advisories were issued May 13 for Martin Beach and four areas of Holly Beach in Cameron Parish. The swim advisories issued May 6 for Hackberry and Rutherford beaches in Cameron Parish remain in effect.

Please note that this is NOT a closure of the beach or facilities at Hackberry, Holly, Martin or Rutherford beaches. All areas remain open for boating and land-based activities.

The advisories, issued through the Louisiana BEACH Monitoring Program, state that the public should avoid swimming at these locations because the high levels of bacteria are a potential health risk. This is especially important for the elderly, babies, small children and people who are chronically ill or have compromised immune systems. The advisories remain in effect until DHH samples show water bacterial levels are acceptably lowered.

High levels of enteric bacteria indicate fecal contamination in water. This can happen because of stormwater runoff, area livestock and wildlife or human sewage. These bacteria indicate the possible presence of disease-causing organisms which, if swallowed, can cause vomiting, diarrhea, cramping or fever.

The Louisiana BEACH Monitoring Program is a partnership between the Department of Health and Hospitals, the Department of Environmental Quality and the Louisiana Office of State Parks. Cameron Parish Police Jury, The Town of Grand Isle and Lafourche Parish Police Jury are partners in this project and are responsible for displaying, maintaining and removing swim advisory signs at area beaches.

The program monitors bacteria levels of water at 13 locations throughout the state from April through October. For more information on the program or to check the status of monitoring at the different locations, please visit www.ophbeachmonitoring.com.